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A Stevenson High School student's award-winning artwork will hang in the nation's Capitol.

Junior Elle Kruger of Vernon Hills picked up top prize in the 23rd annual Congressional High School Art Competition for the 10th District. The contest is called "An Artistic Discovery."

Kruger recently received the award from U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, a Highland Park Republican who represents the district.

Her untitled piece was selected as the grand prize winner from among 18 original submissions.

"I was really surprised," Kruger said in a news release from the school. "It took awhile to soak in."

Kruger's piece — a colored, detailed pencil drawing of a cabbage leaf — will hang in the U.S. Capitol with other grand-prize winners from across the country.

In addition, Southwest Airlines will provide two round-trip tickets to Washington for Kruger and a relative for a national ceremony in June.

"I've never been to Washington before," Kruger said. "I really want to visit the Vietnam memorial. I've read a lot about the designer."

A panel of professional artists from the North Shore Art League evaluated the entries, studying content, technical skill, design and originality.

Two other students from Stevenson High School were named runners-up in the competition. Junior Siying Chen of Lake Zurich claimed second place and senior Emily Albun of Buffalo Grove placed third.

Their artwork will hang in Kirk's offices.

"The outstanding artwork and photography on display here today speaks to the creativity of our young people and the excellent art education they are receiving," Kirk said in his own news release. "I am very proud of the high schools throughout the district and the strong art departments available to our young artists."

All of the students who entered the contest will receive honorary congressional certificates of appreciation, as will the art teachers from their schools.